1; Drew G-2 (1862-1872) 1874 AVI Kashmir AVI

it a bouldery river-bed a mile or more wide. There are remains of towers and walls that protected the place, some towards the jungle, some at the edge of the cliff that overhangs the stream-bed, and there is an old gateway at the top of the slope that gave access from below. These, as well as the Mahal, that is to say palace or mansion, the remains of which show it to have been substantially built though not large, were the work of the Balâwar Rajas. One other building there is that still has repute; this is an old Shivdwára, or Hindú temple, much ornamented with carvings, in the sandstone that is the material for all the buildings. Of this temple one side has fallen, and the rest seems ready to follow, while the remnants scattered about of columns and other pieces of masonry show that the buildings were formerly more extensive; the space around the temple is now all shaded by large banyán trees. Balâwar, as at present inhabited, is no more than a village. 361 175 [346]

Fadú is a place of name a few miles from Balâwar, of name because it also was the seat of a separate rule, whose Rajas were of one caste (a subdivision of the Rájpúts called Pál) with those of Kulú, Bhadarwáh, and Balâwar, or Basolí; the four, being so allied, were often at war with each other. The last five Rajas of Fadú, I hear, were— 361 175 442

Pur Nepál.	Avtár Singh (in the time of Ranjít Singh of Lâhor).
Prithí Pál.	Umed Singh.
Jy Singh.	

Rámkot is a place some miles west, where used to live a family of feudal power, whose lords were the Jummoo Rajas. Its original name was Mánkot, and the family of Mîns who held it are called Mánkotiá Mîás. It is not long since the new name was given to the place. There is a large fort, which has been handed over to the Maharaja's new son-in-law for a dwelling-place. [913]

Bhimnagar, some miles north of Rámkot, is where the Outer Hills join the Middle Mountains. It is built at a height of 2700 feet above the sea, on a small triangular plateau, which is cut

Lt Dver G-3 (186.-1872) 1875 AVI Kashmir AVI

Singh, his brother, succeeding him at Pûnch, now rules there in obedience to the Maharaja.

Pûnch is a compact town, with a good bazaar; it is situated at the meeting of two valleys, which make a wide opening among the hills; the valley itself being somewhat over 3000 feet above the sea, we are here in a part that may be reckoned to belong either to the Outer Hills or to the Middle Mountains. There are here a fort and palace, lately added to and improved with much taste by Raja Mott Singh.

A word or two as to the hill-forts of this region.

All over the low hills, on both sides of the Chinâb, they are in extraordinary number. They were built at the time when each little tract had its own ruler, and each ruler had to defend himself against his neighbour. These forts are commonly on the summit of some rocky hill, with naturally-scarped face; by their position, and by the way they were planned, they are well protected against escalade. Though now they have all come into the hands of one ruler, they are still kept up, that is so far that a small garrison—may be only of a dozen men—is kept in each. Some of the most known are Mangla, on the Jhelam; Mangal Dev, near Nanshahra; and Trech, near Kotli; these are each on the summit of a rocky precipitous hill most difficult of access.

1s Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

These characteristics, combined with the presence of numbers of Kashmírí people who live in the town, have gained for it the name "Chotá Kashmír," or Little Kashmir.*

More than half of the inhabitants of Bhadarwáh itself are Kashmírí; these quite throw into the shade the original Hindú inhabitants; they have adopted almost all kinds of employment, numbers of them are shopkeepers, and numbers more are occupied in making shawls, on orders from Amritsar and Nurpúr. Some Kashmírís have land, and cultivate it themselves; some, indeed, do this for half the year, and follow shawl-weaving for the other half—during the long snowy winter. Around are several villages of Kashmírís; but here, outside the town, they are much outnumbered by the Bhadarwáhís, the older inhabitants. I could not find out at what time so many Kashmírís settled here, but, from the absence of any distinct tradition on the subject, we may conclude that it was at least three or four generations ago.

An elevation of 5400 feet above the sea gives the place at this time of the year an agreeable temperature, that makes it a favourite with many. Sometimes Gurkhás from the British regiment at Bakloh, bringing their wives and families, spend their leave at Bhadarwáh, where they can get the advantages of fine air and cheap living.

On a spur, some 300 feet above the town, is the Fort, a square building of combined wood and stone, with bastions of masonry work. Near by are some remains of the former residence of the old Rajas. The Rajas of Bhadarwáh were Mián Rájpúts; they were allied, as to caste, with the families that ruled over Basolí and Kulu. This old family was dispossessed about the year 1810 by the Chamba family, who thus combined Bhadarwáh and Chamba. These others held it for twenty or thirty years only, when, through two or three stages of transfer, it fell into the hands of Guláb Singh, of Jummoo.†

* Another name (which the Hindús sometimes give to it) is *Bhadar-kháli*, derived, I think, from the sacredness of a shrine there is on the river-bank opposite.

† One account shows Bhadarwáh to have passed from the Chamba family, by way of dowry for one of the daughters of that family, to Raja Hira Singh, nephew to Raja Guláb Singh. A short interregnum followed on Hira Singh's violent death;

1; Drew G-8 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

in a very sinuous course between steep inaccessible rocks; great eddies are produced in the curves of it. For several miles the gorge is impassable in any other way than on a raft of two or three large logs lashed together, and this is by no means a secure mode of traversing it. I heard of one or of two men, I forget which, who, in following their calling of collecting timber, had ventured into the gorge, and their raft had been caught in one of the eddies, and been carried round and round between the impracticable cliff and the main current, in such a way that no efforts of the men could disentangle it; and so for days the raft went round bearing its helpless burden, who, at last, when nearly exhausted, were saved by the chance arrival of some others of their trade, by whose aid the first were freed from their watery prison.

On one of the projecting rocks, nearly surrounded by the deep waters of the river, is built a fort called Dhiyāngarh, named after Raja Dhiyān Singh, and farther up are the forts of Salāl and Arnās, on opposite sides. Above the falling in of the Ans River the banks are more accessible; the footpaths that connect the villages, which at intervals occur in the valley, sometimes go along near the water-side, and sometimes have to leave it for a bit where rock-cliffs some hundreds of feet in height bound it.

I have not passed along the whole of the course of the river, but have crossed or touched it at various points. Rāmban is a place near where the Jummoo and Kashmir road crosses it by a wooden bridge of considerable span. Here the river is about 2400 feet above the sea; the village is on a terraced plateau a few hundred feet above it. Above Rāmban the mountains rise boldly on both sides of the river, with sometimes a rocky and sometimes a grassy slope; the stream flows in a narrow channel between them, often with a great depth of water. In this part is Gajpat Fort, a small work on the right bank, crowning a sugar-loaf hill whose sides have a slope of 40° or 45°. Farther on is Doda, fort and village; a place I have never seen.

The character of the mountains on the north side of the Chināb can be seen in one view from the opposite mountain. As one climbs this, on the south side of the river, and at successive

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

133 in and display the strange hues of their bodies through the shower. The cascade is in greatest force in the spring, on the melting of the snows above, and it was thus I saw it; from that time it diminishes, but it is again increased when heavy rain falls in the rainy season, that is, the late summer; in winter it is least.

361 [366] The small town of Kishtwār is dirty and dilapidated. There are about 200 houses, including a bazaar with some shops; but there was a complete absence of life, of the busy cheerfulness one sees in some bazaars. The people seem to have been brought to a low stage of poverty from having in former years been given over to the Wazīr family, which still holds much influence here. Two large houses, built after the fashion of the houses of the richer people in Kashmir, which belong to that family, are exceptions to the general state of decay. There is an old fort, on a little rising ground, oblong, with corner towers and other projecting buildings: it is manned by some thirty men.

● [712]

563 [564] The inhabitants are more than half Kashmīrī; the rest are Hindūs of the Thakar, Krār, and and other castes. The Kashmīris here, too, carry on their shawl work; there are some twenty workshops for it in the town. In this place, as in Bhadarwāh, they seem to have settled for some generations.

132 The climate of Kishtwār is something like that of Bhadarwāh, but it is somewhat warmer, and must have a less fall of rain and snow. Snow falls during four months, but it does not continually stay on the ground; it may do so for twenty days at a time. On the slope towards the river, 1000 or 1500 feet below, it stays but a day. The fruits produced are apple, quince, three kinds of pear, plum, a few apricots, cherry, peach, grape, mulberry, and walnut.

KISHTWAR HISTORY.

175 Kishtwār was governed by Rājpūt Rajas, who in early times probably ruled independent of all others.

The first whose name I can hear of is Raja *Bhagwān Singh*, who must have lived 200 years or more ago, as he was seven generations back from the one who was ruler fifty years ago.

Lt Drew G-8 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

Pādar is surrounded, we might almost say enclosed, by mountains bearing perpetual snow; these give rise to glaciers, which end off at too high a level for them to project into the main valley. Most of the mountains in sight from below are either the rocky or the forest-covered lower slopes. The cultivated part is very small in extent; there is the collection of villages in the four miles below Atholī, where is the widest opening in the whole tract; and there are some small villages at intervals farther up the two valleys. All these together have 400 houses.

Atholī, which may be counted the chief place in Pādar, is on an alluvial plateau, 6360 feet above the sea and 200 feet above the river; on the opposite bank is a wider plain, some 60 feet lower in level. At the very point of the meeting of the Bhutnā River with the Chīnāb, only 40 or 50 feet above the water, is the present fort, a little toy-looking affair; it is a square work with round corner towers, built, in the manner of the country, of alternate courses of stone and timber, and plastered over; it is garrisoned by ten or twelve men. Behind the fort are remains of the former town of Chatargarh; these are linear heaps of stones, arranged, on the whole, in a square form. On the same plateau are groups of trees, sheltering some wooden temples and shrines.

The Chīnāb, which flows between the two plateaus, comes from the direction of Pāngī through a rock-bounded gorge, in a narrow deep stream; then widening out it sweeps along below Atholī. At the beginning of June, when the sun was fast melting the snows, and the glacier-water was bringing down in suspension a fine light drab mud that coloured the whole river, the rate of the current at this spot was 6½ miles an hour. It is here spanned by a rope bridge; a wooden bridge that for some years had existed, was carried away by a flood about 1865; this probably was the flood which I heard of as having been brought about by a natural damming of the river in Lāhol far away up; the breaking of the dam made the waters rise at Atholī to something like 100 feet above their winter level.

The climate of Pādar is severe. From its elevation, and the considerable moisture of its air, there is a great fall of snow in

1; Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

133+ was loamy and nearly free from stones, but now, coming up northwards and again nearing their edge, we get on pebbly ground, and soon, from a gravelly bank, we look across the Chināb River on to the fort and town of Akhnūr.

491 The river is at this time swollen with the melting snows. Every day of bright sunshine on the higher mountains makes itself felt, raises the level of the water and widens the spread of it, and increases the force of the current. The passage across by the ferry-boat comes to be a serious matter; scores of people, who have been waiting hours for the opportunity, rush in on her coming to the bank, and with the cattle, ponies, and camels that have been forced on board over the bulwarks, soon fill her to overcrowding. When she puts off, weighed down and unmanageable as she is, the force of the current carries her a good half mile away in crossing the few hundred yards. Then, emptied of her freight, the boat is laboriously tracked up again for another trip. Two such journeys each way is as much as can be done in the day's work.

712 361 The appearance of Akhnūr from the left bank of the river is striking. The chief object is the fort, of which a sketch is given. It is a building of lofty walls enclosing a square of over 200 yards, with one entrance gate by the river and another on the land side. The walls are crowned with battlements of the same form as one sees in the Mughal forts throughout Hindostān. The fort was built 90 or 100 years ago by Mīān Teg Singh, who held under Jummoo a jāgīr, here and at Sol, a place in the hills a few miles off. It is now occupied by troops of the Central Government, but the same family, descendants of Teg Singh, retain some of the estates and have their house in the town below.

361 Akhnūr is but just below where the river struggles out of the hills, and just above that part of the plains where the ground is so little above its surface that the channel divides into many. The town is built on a terrace above the river, which is overlooked by a few houses of the better sort, while the part behind is mean and dirty.

A little above the fort, on the slope of the river bank, are found traces of a former city; one sees large well-made bricks on

1; Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV2 Kashmir AV1

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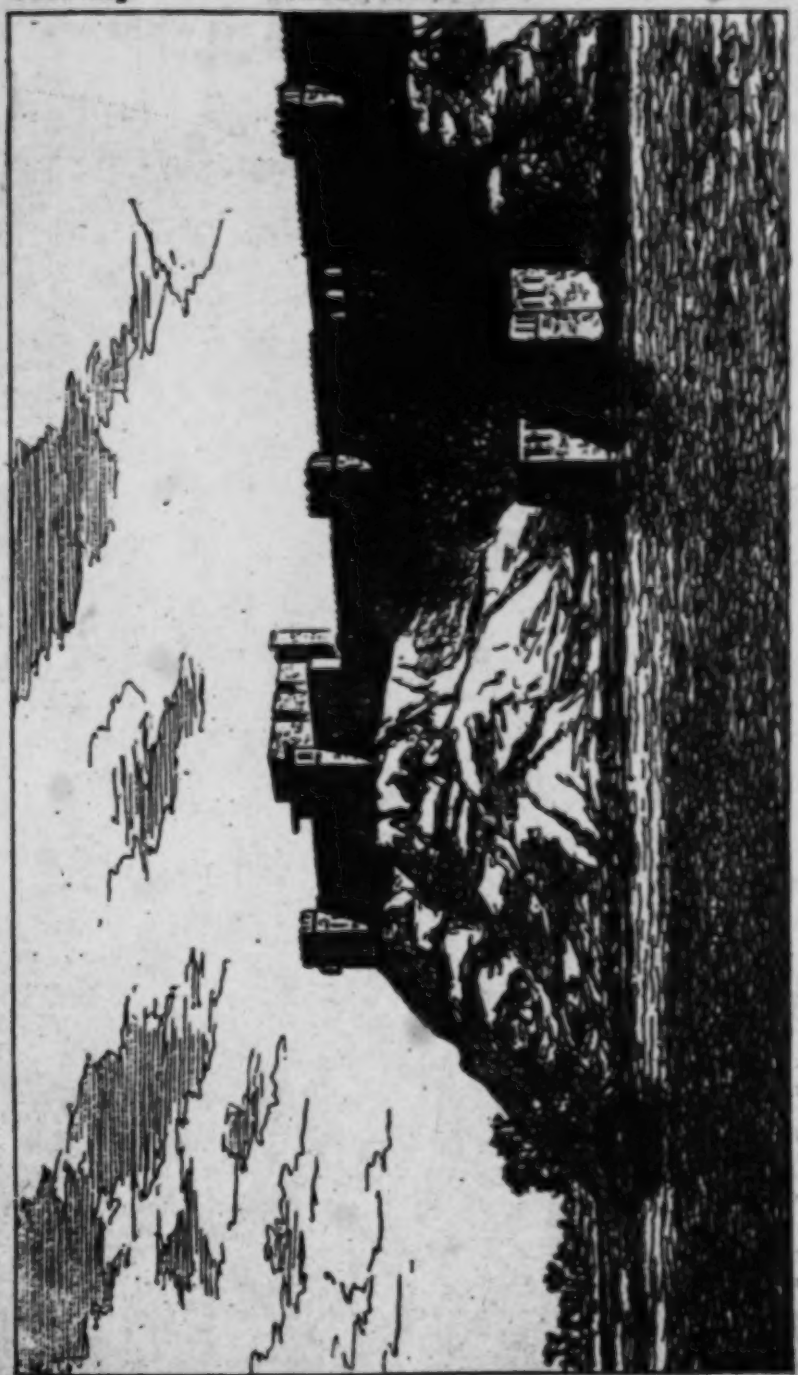

AKHNÚR FORT, ON THE CHENÁB.

2: Gervis T-3 (no data) 1954 AVI Kashmir AVI

132 no longer does one sweat and lie restless on the bed. Of that part Bernier wrote in his letters of far back in 1660, "I find myself transported on a sudden from a torrid to a temperate zone, the mountains we were traversing being covered with every one of our plants and shrubs; I had almost imagined myself in the mountains of Auvergne". And of this journey Arthur Neve commented in his book, *Picturesque Kashmir*, in 1899, "Early in April, when the wheat is ripening in Domel, it is at Chakoti only in the ear, at Uri, though the fields are green, the deciduous trees are almost leafless and at Baramula snow may be lying in the hollows, the fields are bare, and there are all the signs of early spring". It is surprising to find poles fixed upright to the four corners of the bed, for mosquitoes are often found here, and in the autumn can be a pest to those who have not brought a net to cover the bed.

133 Between here and Uri there is some really lovely scenery, much of which is truly magnificent, with lofty peaks towering up on either side, the road at times snaking its way through narrow gorges in which the river Jhelum flows, at times placid and with great swirling pools of brownish water, at others foaming and rushing as it escapes through some close held ravine or rock, rock which is so hard that the centuries of wear has not widened it, so hard that it will turn an ordinary chisel with ease.

361 Uri has a delightful old rest house with electricity for lights
• 712 and fans, a luxury the visitor had thought might be unknown in Kashmir after the smoking oil lamps and hand fans of late. The gorge of the river before Uri is reached is so narrow that it is easy to cast a stone across it; the rocks drop vertically down to the water, the mountain sides are just like great castle buttresses of rock which rise from the rushing Jhelum. The town stands on a triangular plateau which is several hundred feet above the river, and as one nears it, especially when the river is low, there are to be seen several of those sloping, plateau-like, great alluvial fans which run down to the water. Uri is nearly four thousand five hundred feet above sea level; once it was of importance, having its own Raja; now of no importance, the town has become little more than a large village. The fort is interesting though; its founder was at one

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir AV1

time said to have been a common khidmutgar—that, is a table bearer. He had been taken under the care of Ranjit Singh as a boy of seven, became one of his generals and is credited with having overcome the Afghans, "whose women so feared him that to frighten their children they quoted his name in a low deep voice. He was a tyrant in Kashmir, from where he was called after his two years' service from 1820." So the fort is not really very old. It became the home of the Raja from that time on.

Rampur, thirteen miles off, is the next stage of the journey. The road makes a great detour because of the gradient, and follows the contours of the mountains, so avoiding having to cross the large precipitous-sided nullah; after two or three miles you are astonished to find yourself almost back to where you started, the rest house lying across it, being but an arrow-shot away. The hillsides are mostly covered with loose shale, which is a menace at all times, for the rains wash it down on to the road, whilst later when it is all dried out in the sun, the moisture which bound it no longer has its hold, and it slips, a single stone soon collecting tons of the stuff as it tumbles down the mountain side. Although one does get a few seconds' warning of its descent by the terrifying swish and rumbling of the greater boulders, that is of little use for with the echoes of the hills it is difficult to decide, in the short time, from where the sound comes. The yellowish to purple-brown rocks which have been seen all the way from Domel, have now changed to slaty schists; later along the road they are replaced by limestone, and with it the scenery changes; there is now a wild beauty, with glorious forest trees, the ground spread with ferns and flowering bushes; the hills recede, the more gentle slopes being covered with tall deodar trees, standing straight and firm. Great precipices of limestone rise up from pine forests; here and there a fir or pine will have found a roothold on some small ledge and clinging tightly bends out and upwards as though searching for its sisters who crown the hill; here the countryside is truly lovely, and as such has been mentioned right from the earliest writers. Here it is that the gallery—or flume—six miles long, carries the water which, dropping four hundred feet, powers the turbines generating electricity for the Valley. On the way there

4a Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir AV1
Dard AVJ

D 643 576 frontier. It was a motley crowd and picturesque, but I was glad when, after passing the fort, we were conducted to the house built in Major Biddulph's day, and left there in peace.

D 643 The next few days were spent in making acquaintance with the Governor and the members of the Committee, which consisted of the General commanding at Gilgit, the General commanding the regular reinforcements, the Sunadés or officer commanding the irregular troops, and of a couple of high civil officials, the most important of all being Mehta Sher Singh, an old gentleman of high family and position in Kashmir. The ablest among these gentlemen was, perhaps, the Governor, who had held his post for eight years, was heartily sick of it, and was most anxious to settle matters with Hunza and Nagar somehow, and to be permitted to return to Kashmir. He was an adpt at intrigue, the threads of all the frontier affairs were in his hand, and the puppets on both sides of the border generally danced at his bidding.

K 704 My position was difficult; I had distinct orders not to give advice, but I could see very well that, if the negotiations going on failed, the Committee would come to me for it, and that whatever decision they came to, the onus would be thrown on me. Every endeavour was of course made to throw dust in my eyes, and to prevent my getting information as to what had really happened, why the tribes had broken out, what was going on at the moment, and as to the condition of the troops. I was told, however, and I knew the information was true, that between Astor and Nomal, the fort eighteen miles

K 712 704

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir AV1

712 north of Gilgit, then the last Kashmir outpost
704 towards Hunza and Nagar, the Durbar had a force
[708] of eight thousand men. I knew, what I was not intended to know, that the men were half starved, fed on the worst form of grain, the food-grain which ought to have been in the granaries having been fraudulently made away with, and that there was only a month's food for the troops on the Gilgit side of the Indus, and no carriage to bring on any more. The Durbar had poured hundreds of tons of grain into Astor, which was easy enough to do, but had left it to the local authorities to forward this to Gilgit, a task, with their then resources, impossible of accomplishment.

704 I have before described the want of system which
705 existed, so I was not surprised at what I saw *en*
[44] *route* and at Gilgit. Here I found the Kashmir regiments scattered all about the valley in orchards, a sensible enough measure, as they had suffered considerably from cholera, but without a semblance of military precautions being taken. The senior officers never visited their men, not once were the troops under arms during my stay, and I do not think they had ever been properly fallen in since they had left Kashmir. Some days after my arrival at Gilgit nine hundred men were despatched unarmed, without an escort even, and without one single superior officer, four marches back, to fetch up for themselves a month's grain. The day before I arrived the troops were issued a day's supply of good flour to disarm enquiry on my part, but, as a rule, their food was vile, and the men received nothing but two pounds of unground grain, absolutely no extras, not even salt.

4: Durand G-9 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI
Durd AVJ

D 137 and got on to the bare slopes again, but even here there was beauty on all sides, and we passed through masses of a flower like a hollyhock, mostly of delicate white, but some of a lovely pink.

000 At Astor we were met by Raja Bahadur Khan and conducted to our camp. Here I found a collection of letters, and spent a couple of days resting my camp, working off arrears of official correspondence, and inspecting the Kashmir troops, whose condition was deplorable. Robertson rejoined me here, wild to go into Kafiristan, and utterly dissatisfied with the appointment at Gilgit, to his holding which we had both looked forward with so much pleasure. He proposed, if Government agreed to his going, that some young doctor should be sent up to Gilgit to take his place. I was, naturally, much disappointed, but could not stand in his way, and we parted, two months later, in Chitral.

No other doctor was sent up that year, owing to official delays, and the result was that we were left with no one to look after the hundreds of troops in the Gilgit Command, to organise dispensaries and medical arrangements in the country, a thing to which I attached the greatest importance, or to take care of the *personnel* of the Agency. The medical work was retarded by a year, and there was unnecessary suffering among the troops, for the hospitals, such as they were, were useless.

D [364] I remained a few days at Astor to make myself acquainted with the local conditions, inspected the fort and the grain stores, and explored the hillsides K 712 for the site of a summer camp. The barrack accom-

4: Durand G-3 (1888-92) 1900 AV1 Kashmir AV1
Dard AV3

and the water poisonous, but no one seemed to mind. We found a splendid site for hutting troops three miles above the fort, in a large alpine meadow. It was a natural parade-ground, surrounded by splendid fir forests, watered by pure streams which welled out from the foot of a moraine, behind which a glacier stretched up into the mass of Nanga Parbat. There was ample room for barracks and officers' huts, and it was an ideal summer cantonment; but the exigencies of the work that came upon us later forced me to keep the troops nearer Gilgit, and prevented my utilising the place, which remained undesecrated by the shout of the drill-sergeant and the crack of the rifle on the range.

There was nothing new about the march to Bunji, which place we reached in due course. I inspected the troops and fort here, and found forty per cent. of the former useless, and the latter wholly so. The housing of the men, the sanitary arrangements, the warehouses for stores and supplies, were hopelessly bad, while against any serious attack the fort was impossible to defend. The men were terribly ill-fed, and all from eighteen months to two years in arrears of pay; in many cases they had drawn absolutely not a penny for eight months, and for some time previous to that an equivalent in English money of only two shillings a month. Most of them had received no uniform for several years, though stoppages had regularly been made from their pay for its supply. It was a marvel how the troops existed, but the Dogra is the most patient of men, and there was nothing to be gained by deserting. The irregular regiments were in the most terrible

4: Durand G-3 (1888-89) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI
Dard AVJ

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It was the middle of August before we left Gilgit, and the heat was very great. The first march to Nomal presented nothing but the normal difficulties, and was on the whole good. The fort, which had been besieged the year before, was a fairly strong one, but was commanded on three sides by modern rifle fire, and was as usual insanitary and crowded. The next two marches to Chalt, the actual frontier post, were very trying; the road ran between great cliffs in a narrow gorge worn by the raging river, and the heat was intense. The parris were the worst we had seen, so bad indeed that we could not take our horses with us. The Chaichar Parri, the last before we reached Chalt, was a famous position, the outpost to the Hunza-Nagar valley, and one which had never been forced. No horse had ever been taken over the cliff, which had been purposely left in its impassable state, the path running across a hideous precipice on the narrowest possible shelf only a few inches wide. Biddulph describes this piece of road as worse than any ground he had ever crossed when stalking in the mountains, and it certainly was pretty bad. We were met on the far side by a deputation from Nagar, with horses for our use. The Chalt fort had only been held on sufferance by the Kashmir troops; it was a miserable square enclosure, with no proper command over its water-supply, and was dominated by another fort occupied by the Nagar people, and situated within a couple of hundred yards.

I was joined on my march by Raja Bahadur Khan of Astor, who was closely connected by marriage with both the Hunza and Nagar ruling families, and by Raja Akbar Khan of Punyal. I was anxious to show

4: Durand G-S (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI
Dard AVJ

K 705 Feeling that the whole secret of supply for the Gilgit troops lay in extending cultivation, I had turned my energies to making water channels which would bring thousands of acres of waste land under the plough. To this end I had obtained the services of a company of Kashmir sappers under a most excellent and well-trained officer, Major Gokul Chand. His men were badly equipped, but willing, and he was a tower of strength. We had done a good deal towards improving the irrigation of the valley before I realised the full extent of my coming difficulties in supplying the troops. When I found out exactly how we stood I took off every available man from this most necessary work, and turned all my strength on to the still more urgent task of improving the existing tracks into paths fit for mule traffic. The necessity for this was evident. Over K [482] bad roads coolies can only carry a load of from sixty to eighty pounds, in addition to five days' food for themselves. After the first few days they begin to consume what they carry, and bad roads make short marches. Mules carry four and five times as much as men, and only eat twice as much. Roughly stated, that is the whole problem of supply over frontier roads.

K 712 D 487 Eighteen miles from Gilgit was the fort of Nomal, which the tribesmen had besieged three years before. For fourteen miles the road was fairly practicable for mules, but four miles were impassable in summer. In winter the road ran down into the bed of the river, and mules could use it, but when the snows began melting and poured their floods down the valleys the lower road became impassable, and only

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI Durand AV 7

B 661 time that Uzr Khan was desperately jealous of the boy, who was his father's favourite, and very popular with the people, that he hated his brother with added bitterness for his popularity with us, and that in his ignorant and suspicious mind lurked the fear that on the old chief's death we should support his young brother, should he attempt to gain possession of the little kingdom. Yet I had been obliged to advise the boy to act as his father wished, and this was the result.

K 712 The murder did not affect the position on the frontier, but the news which came at the same time that I heard of it did so very seriously. Twelve miles beyond Nomal lay Chalt, a small fort held by Kashmir troops under an agreement with the Nagar Chief. Close to it lay Chaprot, in which also there was a detachment of Kashmir troops. B 662 721 Uzr Khan was now collecting his forces, and preparing to attack both Chalt and Chaprot. He would have moved the moment the murder was committed, but that he was not quite sure of what his father would do, and that he was in correspondence with the Hunza Chief and not in complete accord with him. Two young nephews of his were in Hunza, and he had sent to the Thum and asked that they might also be killed. The Hunza Chief had declined; he was apparently of opinion that they might be useful later in case of trouble with Nagar, being nearer in succession than Uzr Khan, and, moreover, they were his sister's boys. So he declined with indignation, and relations for a few days were strained between the two scoundrels.

K 678 721 There was not much time to think; moreover, I naturally had in mental pigeon-holes plans to

AVI

[facing p. 242]

eventually decided to retain it. Its position on the flank of the Gilgit-Kashmir road made it of considerable military importance, and a force stationed there effectually barred the way to any incursion of the Indus valley tribes. Moreover, it gave us command of new and shorter road to British territory crossing only one pass, the Babusar, and leading through the uplands of Kaghan to Abbottabad in the Punjab.

In the month of May I left Gilgit for India, as it turned out for good, Robertson, who reached Gilgit a few days after I left, taking over the work of the Agency. My last official act was of a pleasing and peaceful character, and consisted in unlocking with a silver key the gates of the completed Indus Bridge, which was declared open and named after His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir.

I spent some weeks at Simla, during which the affairs of the Gilgit frontier were again gone into. It was decided that a regiment of British Indian troops, one of the Pioneer battalions, should be sent up, and some other modifications were made in the arrangement of the frontier garrisons. The whole of the troops were to be placed formally under my command. Matters having been settled satisfactorily, I took three months' leave and went home, intending to return again in the autumn. But the fates decreed otherwise, and I did not rejoin my appointment.

And so I parted without formal leave-taking from the people I had learnt to love so well, from the work into which I had for five years thrown my whole heart, and from the great mountains whose fascination can never be forgotten. The change

[illegible]